

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 839

By Turner

A RESOLUTION to urge state and local governmental agencies to enhance access to mental health services in the criminal justice system.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly believes in the need for necessary reforms to the criminal justice system and advocates for successful reentry of returning citizens to their communities; and

WHEREAS, the costs of incarceration account for a substantial amount of the state's budget; and

WHEREAS, the cost of incarceration is an expense borne by the state's taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than half of those incarcerated in the United States have mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, enhanced mental health training for law enforcement personnel and the use of diversion programs will reduce arrest rates by deescalating mental health crisis situations; and

WHEREAS, mentally ill incarcerated or imprisoned adults are disproportionately abused, beaten, and raped; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby urge all relevant state and local governmental agencies to consider and enact policies to enhance access to mental health services in the criminal justice system to create better results for both individuals and the system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge all relevant state and local governmental agencies to consider programs to improve mental health treatment for individuals involved in the criminal justice system aimed at aiding communities and ending recidivism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the state and local law enforcement communities are urged to consider holistically integrating mental health treatment and services, such as crisis intervention teams, into the criminal justice system spectrum in an effort to address mental health crisis situations and to reduce arrest rates.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also urge all relevant state and local governmental agencies to consider promising criminal justice interventions and policies for mentally ill offenders, such as diversion programs and mental health courts, to direct such offenders to community-based mental health treatment programs instead of prison or jail.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.